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BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

IN THE 1990s

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### Executive Summary

#### **Breaking the Glass Ceiling in the 1990s**

Analysis of survey results from a representative sample of 276 female executives and a matched sample of 80 female executives and 80 male peers show the following general trends. The purpose of the study was to examine the characteristics and attitudes of women who had broken through the invisible barrier for women, labelled the "glass ceiling" at the top of U.S. organizations. Four areas were addressed in this analysis: Sex role socialization, internal career paths and career attitudes, mentorship and networking and career-family concerns.

- o Most female executives in the sample had attained high organizational rank. Eighty percent reported that they were within 3 decision levels to the top of their organization.
- o Most female executives surveyed (87%) were employed by small and medium sized companies (500 employees or less).
- o About half (47%) of the female executive respondents were employed by service or retailing organizations and 30% were employed by manufacturing companies.
- o Demographic characteristics of the female executives included 77.2% married with 44% having children under 18 living at home. The average age of the female executive respondents was 44 years, the sample was 95% white and 71.6% held bachelor or masters degrees.
- o Sex role socialization attitudes were very different between female and male executives in the matched sample. Female executives held higher perceptions of equality of women in society, in comparison to their male peers.
- o Analysis of internal career paths indicated that most of the female executives who had broken the glass ceiling were in the line positions rather than staff positions.
- o In terms of career attitudes, the female executives were very similar to their male peers. No significant differences were found between female and male executives in terms of job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, job stress and intentions to quit.
- o Expectations of being promoted further significantly varied between female and male executive peers. Women had lower perceptions of their own future promotability than their male counterparts.
- o A comparison of female and male executives' total years to reach their current position showed no significant differences; women did not take significantly longer to attain their organizational rank than men.
- o Mentorship and networking were important aspects of the career of female executives. Seventy-two percent reported having a mentor and mentoring was significantly related to expectations of promotion and salary. With respect to mentoring others, 41% of the female executives surveyed indicated that they have been a mentor and that 28% of their proteges had been female. Further, 39% indicated that they were interested in mentoring others in the future.



- o Career and family concerns were being addressed informally by the employers of the female executives. Sixty-eight percent indicated that their employer made accommodations in working hours in order for them to take care of problems at home. However, few reported the offering of family supportive policies (such as child care assistance or parental leave) by their organization.
- o Family concerns also affected the careers of the female executives in terms of relocation decisions. Twenty percent had changed jobs due to a partner's career change.
- o Analysis of female executives who have children under 18 living at home compared to those who don't showed significant differences in terms of increased stress, reduced promotion expectations and increased thoughts of quitting their present job.
- o Career plateaus of female executives were significantly reduced by sex role egalitarian attitudes, being in a line position rather than a staff position, and having a mentor.

The results of this study imply that the four areas addressed in this study do significantly affect the career attitudes and outcomes of female executives. Female executives perceived more equality between men and women and this sex role egalitarianism attitude was negatively related to career plateau. Internal career path information indicated that the path to the top for women is through line authority rather than staff positions and that career plateauing can be avoided in line positions. Further having a mentor was significantly and positively related to promotion expectations and salary and also reduced career plateaus for female executives. Career-family issues were not related to career plateaus or other outcomes. However, having children under 18 living at home was related to reduced promotion expectations, increased stress and thoughts of quitting and having a mentor.

To facilitate the upward mobility of women in organizations, the results of this study suggest that attention be focused on the following:

- o Education and encouragement of perceived equality between women and men.
- o Placement of qualified women in line authority positions.
- o Development of both formal and informal mentoring programs.
- o Employer assistance and support in areas related to career-family issues.

## BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING IN THE 1990s

### Background

In Fiscal Year 1990, the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor funded a research project with the purpose of investigating the career experiences of top level female executives. These women, by virtue of their high ranking organizational positions, had broken through the "glass ceiling", a term which refers to the statistical fact that women are not represented at top levels in U.S. organizations (Morrison et al., 1987). The purpose of this project was to examine the labor force experience of a national random sample of executive women, who will be an important component of the workforce in the year 2000. By examining executive careers in the 1990s, it is hoped that obstacles to womens' careers can be identified to enable labor force participation at all organizational levels.

The number of women in the workforce is increasing rapidly. In comparison to 1950, when thirty-one percent of all women were working. Current data indicate that more than fifty percent of all women work (Borisoff & Merrill, 1983; Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Hoschild, 1989; Powell, 1988; Rix, 1988). During World War II, women entered the U.S. Labor force in large numbers, but prior to this, it was rare for women to leave the home to seek employment. Today it is clear that working women are the norm rather than the exception and many U.S. families have come to rely upon dual incomes. The traditional home environment of working father, stay-at-home mother and two or more children has declined to about ten percent of U.S. households (Henderson, 1989; Raynolds, 1987).

Since white males have become a minority in some industries (Hunsaker, 1985), the issues of working women are more important than ever. It is anticipated that a net measure of 80 percent of all new labor force entrants will be female, minorities or immigrants (Schwartz, 1989). Labor economists are predicting a skilled labor shortage as early as the year 2000. Hence, as the availability of skilled labor decreases, the competition for attracting and retaining skilled, experienced women will increase. It has been suggested that women will gravitate toward firms which incorporate them into the system, provide them with challenging work, offer them equal opportunities for advancement and reward them equitably (Raynolds, 1987).

#### The Glass Ceiling

Almost half a century has passed since the initial influx of women into the workforce during World War II. While numbers of women working have increased significantly, the number of women in top executive positions remains negligible (Fierman, 1990). One author estimates that the percentage of women in upper level management positions is about 2 percent (Powell, 1988). At present, the chance of a woman "...becoming a high-ranking corporate executive is about 4.5 percent" (Siskin, Staller and Rorvik, 1989, as cited in Risks, 1990, p. 6). Morrison et al. (1987) define the glass ceiling as "a transparent barrier" that keeps women from rising above a certain level in corporations and note that the glass ceiling "applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women" (original emphasis, p. 13). The glass ceiling may exist at different levels indifferent companies or industries. Morrison et al. (1987) placed it just short of the general manager position and point out that even in more progressive companies, it is

rare to find women at the general management level or above. Lower level managers may be responsible for technical aspects of development, manufacture, sales and marketing of products. In contrast, general managers are often responsible for coordinating product development, manufacture, sales, marketing and overall business strategy for tens or hundreds of products (Kotter, 1982; Morrison et al., 1987). A position at this level represents a major transition in level of corporate responsibility for the job incumbent. At present, few women have been able to achieve promotion to the general management level. Morrison et al. (1987) explain the inability of women to achieve high organizational rank (i.e., the glass ceiling) in terms of three levels of pressure faced by women executives. The first, pressure from the job itself is also faced by men. Yet, the other two pressures are more unique to the situation of women: Their pioneer role in the job and the strain of their family obligations. Other explanations for the lack of women in management have been proposed.

Terborg (1977) offered a human capital explanation for the lack of women in managerial positions. He noted that women were not qualified for management positions, not because they lack potential, but rather because they lack necessary skills and experience to compete with men for managerial positions. While this observation could be debated even for that point in time, fifteen years later, now that women have been in the labor force for a significant number of years, and are more highly educated than ever, the proposition is even more questionable, based upon statistics on women's educational attainment in the U.S. In the 1973-1974 period, about 7 percent of all MBAs awarded and 11 percent of all medical and law degrees went to women. In 1985, women earned 31 percent of the MBA degrees; 31 percent of the medical degrees and 39

percent of the law degrees awarded (Rix, 1988). In agreement with these statistics on women's educational attainment, a recent survey found that CEOs of some of the largest industrial firms in the U.S. acknowledged that women have the necessary technical skills to succeed (Rierman, 1990). Yet, while women now occupy about one-third of all management positions, they are still clustered in the lower levels of management in positions of less authority, status and pay than men (Fierman, 1990; Larwood & Gattiker, 1987; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Powell, 1988).

When women do advance, it is rarely as rapidly or as far as their male counterparts (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Recent studies of MBA graduates report that female MBAs were initially paid as much as men, but that within ten years their salaries fell behind that of their male counterparts by nearly twenty percent (Devanna, 1984 as cited in Raynolds, 1987; Wallace, 1989). The above statistics indicate that women now have the qualifications and experience to reach the top levels of U.S. organizations, and yet, they are still not well represented at upper organizational echelons.

Another explanation for the persistence of the glass ceiling is possible discrimination against women and minorities. A recent study published by the Secretary's office of the U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) defines the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions" (p. 1). Based upon review of nine Fortune 500 organizations, this investigation found that the proposed glass ceiling was even lower than previous definitions have implied. Of the 147,179 employees studied in the nine organizations, only 16.9 percent of those in management positions were women. Hence, the



glass ceiling effect not only exists, but it exists at a much lower level than previous studies have concluded.

Very little is known about the factors which may enable women to break through the glass ceiling. It seems logical, then, to locate women who have attained high levels in U.S. organizations and to examine personal and organizational characteristics which may have facilitated their rise to the top. This report is based on a study of female executives who are exceptions to the glass ceiling statistics noted in the preceding discussion. These women have broken through the glass ceiling by attaining relatively high levels in their organizations. Given the above glass ceiling definitions and statistics, locating these women and securing their participation in this study was a difficult task, resulting in a smaller final sample size than was originally anticipated (the size of the survey samples was the major limitation of this study). The U.S. Department of Labor's glass ceiling initiative found that the glass ceiling was even lower than anticipated and that they were often not able to interview female executives at certain levels, because there were not women in those positions. Hence, examination the sample obtained in the present study should provide rich insights into the careers of women who have broken through the glass ceiling. They are a very exceptional group. Further, analysis of these data will indicate directions for future research on the careers of female executives.

#### Model of Barriers to the Upward Mobility of Women

Based upon a comprehensive literature review, four broad areas which have been proposed to contribute to the glass ceiling were investigated in this research: sex role socialization, internal career paths, mentorship and networking and career versus family concerns (see Freedman & Phillips, 1988;

Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989 for reviews). Sex role socialization may affect the career mobility of women due to pervasive stereotypes regarding women's and men's roles in society. That is, many female and male executives may still have difficulty accepting women's roles outside of the home. Further, prior research has indicated that women's perceptions of their equality to men are positively and significantly related to income (Acocck & Edwards, 1982). Second, internal career paths in organizations may limit women's career advancement due to rigidly determined career ladders which do not allow for women to take time off from work during child-bearing years (Schwartz, 1989). Also, women have been reported to sometimes experience career plateaus, due to being in staff positions (e.g., human resources) rather than line positions (e.g., plant manager) (Larwood & Gattiker, 1987). Also, career path plateaus have been associated with career attitudes of individuals (Hall, 1976; Feldman, 1988). Third, studies have shown that mentorship and networking provide access to information that is crucial to upward career mobility (Kanter, 1977; Schein, 1978; Tichy, 1982; Kram, 1983; Brass, 1985). The informal network is particularly important because that is how one forms alliances, obtains information and learns the ropes (Fairhurst, 1985). Yet, women are frequently excluded from mentoring and networks (Fairhurst, 1985; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989) or exclude themselves (Albrecht, 1983). With respect to mentoring relationships at work, which have been shown to be critical to upward mobility (Fagenson, 1989; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1991), women have difficulty establishing mentor relationships with men in male-dominated careers (Ragins, 1989; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1985). Mentoring and networking are important to career development and it is frequently in informal situations that these associations develop. Both men and women tend

to form networks with members of their own sex; thus women are either excluded or exclude themselves from more powerful male-dominated networks (Albrecht, 1984; Brass, 1985). Thus, the examination of the characteristics of mentors and proteges of this sample of female executives will provide important information on the career development networking of those who have broken through the glass ceiling. Finally, career versus family decisions were examined, due to studies which have suggested that women's family concerns inhibit their career mobility (Hall & Hall, 1978; Schwartz, 1989; Hoschild, 1989). Specific areas of career-family concerns investigated were employer accommodation to family concerns of female executives, employer family supportive policies and their utilization and the effects of relocation on the careers of female executives. No studies located in the literature review included all four of these areas. Taken together, these four areas should provide insights into the career experiences of top-level female executives and their paths to the top of their organizations. This model of barriers to women's upward mobility is summarized in Figure 1.



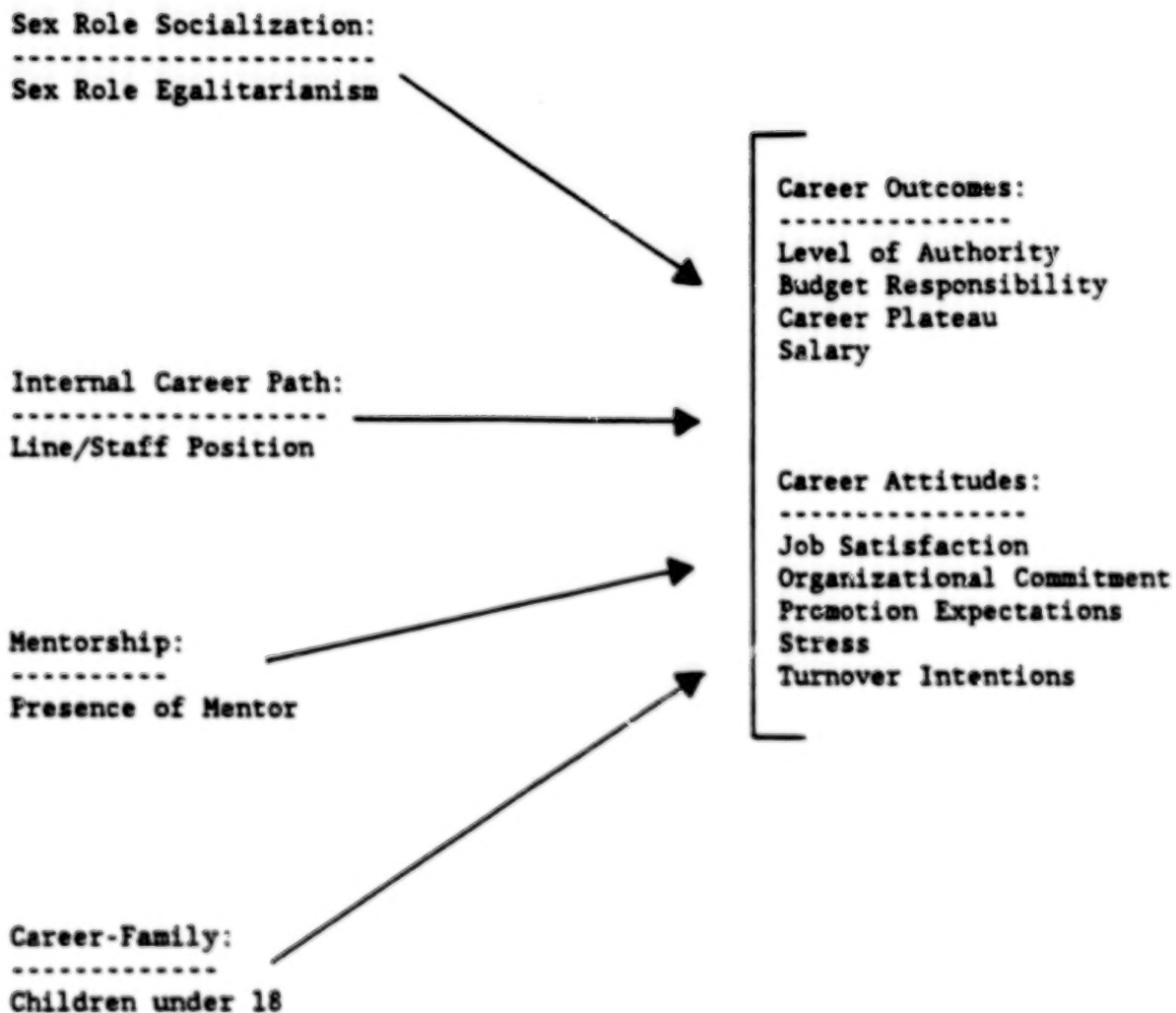


Figure 1. Model of Influences on Career Outcomes and Attitudes of Female Executives

### Research Methodology

The project involved extensive literature searches, interviews, focus groups, and a national random mail survey of female executives and their male peers. The purpose of the literature searches, interviews, and focus groups was to provide necessary background for the development of the survey instrument. The results in this report are based upon statistical analyses of responses to the mail survey portion of the project. The survey contained questions about sex role socialization, career paths, mentorship and networking and career-family issues.

### Participants and Procedures

Potential participants were screened to determine their organizational level, and willingness to participate in the survey. Six hundred potential participants were mailed surveys, and 176 completed and returned them in postage-paid envelopes. Of those, 80 were able to identify a male peer and this peer completed and returned his survey in a separate, postage-paid envelope. The final samples were examined and found to be representative of executive samples in terms of demographics (respondent age, experience, race, education level and marital status). The sample also was also representative with respect to size of the respondents' employers, industries and geographic location. Detailed characteristics of the samples are contained in the respondent and respondent employment profiles shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Several characteristics of the samples should be noted. First, most female executives had attained relatively high organizational rank in their organizations. Eighty percent reported that they were within 3 decision levels to the top of their organization. However, it is extremely important

Table 1

## Respondent characteristics: Female and Male Executives

Characteristic	Female	Male
<b>Age:</b>		
Mean	44.22 years	42.47 years
Standard Deviation	10.35 years	10.27 years
Range	27-75 years	24-76 years
<b>Race:</b>		
White	95.0%	97.5%
Afro-American	.6%	1.2%
Hispanic	1.7%	0%
All other	2.7%	1.2%
<b>Education Level:</b>		
Bachelor	43.2%	55.0%
Post-Bachelor	16.9%	15.0%
Masters	12.5%	15.0%
Doctorate	1.7%	2.5%
<b>Marital Status:</b>		
Single	9.7%	6.3%
Married	77.2%	85.0%
Divorced	7.4%	8.7%
Widowed	3.2%	0%
<b>Location of Home:</b>		
City/Urban Area	37.5%	40.0%
Suburbs	33.5%	40.0%
Rural Area	29.0%	20.0%

Table 2

## Respondent Employment Characteristics: Female and Male Respondents

Characteristic	Female	Male
<b>Place of Work:</b>		
Office	94.9%	96.2%
Home	3.45	2.5%
<b>Employment Status:</b>		
Full Time	95.5%	96.2%
Part Time	4.0%	2.5%
<b>Years of Respondent Experience in Current Type of Work:</b>		
Mean	12.70 years	13.14 years
Standard Deviation	9.07 years	10.81 years
Range	less than 1 month to more than 45 years	
<b>Number of Decision Levels between Respondent Position and Top Position:</b>		
0	25.6%	12.5%
1	35.8%	55.6%
2	18.8%	16.5%
3	8.0%	10.1%
4	4.5%	2.6%
5 or more	2.3%	2.6%
Mean	1.43	1.89
Standard Deviation	1.46	1.23
Range	1 - 7	1-7
<b>Size of Budget over which Respondent Exercises Authority:</b>		
Mean	\$2,554,000	\$2,931,000
Standard Deviation	\$3,361,000	\$3,712,000
Range	\$5,000 to over \$1,000,000,000	

Table 2 (continued)

## Respondent Employment Characteristics: Female and Male Respondents

Characteristic	Female	Male
<b>Number of Months Since Respondent's Last Promotion</b>		
1 - 12	42.0%	36.2%
12 - 24	13.6%	20.0%
24 - 36	15.3%	15.0%
More than 36	12.6%	20.5%
Mean	49.34%	53.97%
Standard Deviation	58.69%	62.74%
Range	1 - 360	1 - 360
<b>Respondent's Current Salary:</b>		
Mean	\$61,000	\$60,200
Standard Deviation	\$51,590	\$39,000
Range	\$14,000 - \$360,000	
<b>Number of Persons Directly Reporting to Respondent:</b>		
Mean	36.80	42.38
Standard Deviation	98.19	46.59
Range	1 - 350	1 - 350
<b>Number of Hours Worked per Week by Respondent:</b>		
Mean	47.48	50.34
Standard Deviation	10.03	11.07
Range	10 - 100	10 - 100

Table 2 (continued)

## Respondent Employment Characteristics: Female and Male Respondents

Characteristic	Female	Male
<b>Size of Respondent's Current Employer (Total Number of Employees):</b>		
1 - 10	44.3%	53.7%
11 - 50	30.1%	27.0%
51 - 100	4.0%	4.1%
101 - 500	7.3%	2.7%
Over 500	12.5%	8.1%
<b>Industry of Respondent's Current Employer:</b>		
Service	46.3%	53.9%
Manufacturing	26.3%	25.0%
Government	5.0%	2.0%
Retailing	2.5%	2.5%
Small Business	13.8%	7.5%

to note that most of the female executives who had attained this rank (87%) were employed by small and medium sized organizations (500 employees or less). It must be noted that the Secretary's glass ceiling initiative report investigated nine large organizations (the range of employees in these organizations was reported to be under 8,000 to more than 300,000). Also, it is important to note the industries in which the women were employed. About half of those surveyed (47%) were employed by service or retailing organizations and 30% were employed by manufacturing companies. Other demographic characteristics of the sample included 77.2% married with 44% having children under 18 living at home. The average age of the female executive sample was 44 years, the sample was 95% white and 71.6% held bachelor or masters degrees.

The sample was comprised of mostly high-ranking individuals, as indicated by their responses to questions about budgets, decision levels and job titles. Given the definitions of the glass ceiling reviewed above and the Secretary's glass ceiling initiative which reports the glass ceiling to be lower than originally defined, it is reasonable to assume that most of these women had attained relatively high organizational rank and had hence, been able to break the glass ceiling in their organizations.

### Measures

Based upon the literature review, interviews and focus groups, a survey was developed to assess the key areas identified for study: sex role socialization, internal career paths, mentorship and networking and career-family issues. A pretest of the survey was conducted on convenience samples of 110 female and male executives in Lexington, Kentucky and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Results of this pretest were used to refine the survey questions and to reduce the size of the survey.

Sex Role Socialization. The final survey included the short form of the Beere-King Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES) (Beere et al., 1984; King & King, 1990), which is a well-documented measure of sex role socialization in the psychological literature. Sex Role Egalitarianism is the respondents' perceptions of the equality of women and men in a variety of family, work and social situations.

Internal Career Paths. Career paths were assessed by having the respondents complete career histories. Job titles were then classified as either line or staff (staff=0; line=1) for the analysis of internal career paths.

Mentorship and Networking. Mentoring was assessed by asking a straightforward question, "Have you ever had a mentor?" after providing a brief description of a mentor as "... an influential individual in your work environment who has advance experience and knowledge and who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to your career" (responses to this question were coded as yes=1; no=2). In addition, detailed characteristics of the mentor relationship were obtained, such as mentor gender, level and the duration of the mentoring relationship. Networking with lower level employees was addressed by asking respondents if they had ever had a protege (responses to the question were classified as yes=1; no=2). As with mentors, detailed characteristics of working relationship were obtained, such as protege gender, level and the duration of the relationship.

Career-Family Issues. Career versus family decisions were addressed in several ways. First, respondents were classified into two groups according to whether or not they had children under 18 living at home. In addition, the survey included questions about (1) employer accommodations to family con-



cerns, (2) employer family policies and utilization and (3) relocation and its effects on career change.

Career Outcomes. The career outcomes investigated were selected for their consistency with the literature on careers in organizations (Hall, 1976; Feldman, 1988): organizational rank obtained (in terms of level of authority), budgetary responsibility, career plateau and salary level.

Career attitudes were measured to determine attitudinal reactions to the career experiences. Job satisfaction was assessed using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967). The MSQ, developed for managerial samples, measures the respondent intrinsic (from the work itself) and extrinsic (from factors such as pay and promotional opportunities) satisfactions with work. Organizational commitment was measured by the Mowday, Steers and Porter Organizational commitment scale (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1979) which addresses the individual's acceptance of organizational goals and values, willingness to exert effort for the organization and a desire to maintain membership in the organization. Expectations of future advancement was assessed by a measure of Career Expectations (CE-6) developed by Scandura and Schriesheim (1991). This six-item measure includes questions regarding the respondents' perception of their own future promotability in their organization. Job stress was assessed using measures of Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Role Overload (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Finally, respondents completed a 12-item turnover intentions measure which assessed their inclination to quit their present job (Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978).

### Analysis

Frequency distributions, cross tabulations and averages (means) were computed for all demographic variables to develop the respondent profiles. Further analysis of the female executive sample was conducted using frequencies, cross tabulations and average (mean) responses on survey questions. Internal career paths were examined in five case study examples by plotting the dates by the level of career attainment for the matched sample to determine how long it took women to attain the high levels they had attained, in comparison to men. All differences between the female and male executives in the matched sample were examined for statistical significance using Chi-square tests and t-tests. The relationships of mentoring and career outcomes were assessed by Pearson correlation coefficients.

The model shown in Figure 1 was tested to determine the relative impact of human capital variables and the four areas shown in the model (sex role egalitarianism, career attitudes, mentorship and career-family issues) on career outcome and career attitude variables. Hierarchical regression analysis procedures were used for each of the dependent career outcome variables (level of authority, budget responsibility, career plateau and salary) and the career attitude variables. A five step regression analysis was conducted, using the female executive sample (N=276), to determine the relative impact of the following: (1) human capital variables (age, race, experience, race, education, marital status, employment status and number of hours worked per week), (2) sex role egalitarianism, (3) career attitudes (4) mentorship and (5) career-family issues with respect to career outcomes and attitudes.

## Results

The purposes of this research study were to examine the careers of female executives in terms of sex role socialization and internal career paths in comparison to male peers, their mentorship and networking experiences with superiors and subordinates and the career versus family concerns they have encountered, including the roles of employer accommodation and family policy. This report is based on data from both the female executive sample (N=176) and the matched sample of female executives and their male peers (N=80).

### Sex Role Socialization

There were gender differences in attitudes toward women and men as equals (sex role egalitarianism) in this matched sample of female and male top-level executives. In general, women reported that they perceived women and men as equal across a variety of life and work situations to a greater degree than their male peers. The complete results of these statistical tests of significance (t-tests) are provided in Table 3. Survey questions contributing to this overall difference in perceptions of sex role egalitarianism included the following (plus other similar questions): "Women can handle job pressures as well as men;" "Male managers are more valuable than female managers;" and "An applicant's sex is an important question in job screening."

For the 20 significant sex role socialization questions, women were more likely to agree with statements of equality and more likely to disagree with statements of inequality than their male counterparts, as shown in Table 3. Hence, for this sample of executives, women were more likely to perceive women's roles as equal to men's. Future research will be needed to determine the pervasiveness of this difference across a variety of organizational

Table 3

Sex Role Socialization,\* Female and Male Executives (N=80)

Question	Average Response		ttest result
	Female Exec (N=80)	Male Exec (N=80)	
Women should have just as much right as men to go to a bar alone.	1.75	1.00	p≤.05
Educational honorary societies in nursing should admit only women.	4.68	4.61	n.s.
Facilities at industrial oriented schools should be expanded to admit qualified female applicants.	4.64	4.35	p≤.05
Women ought to have the same possibilities for leadership positions at work as do men.	1.33	1.33	n.s.
Keeping track of a child's out-of-school activities should be mostly the mother's responsibility. (R)	4.89	4.62	p≤.001
Things work out best in a marriage if the husband leaves his hands off domestic tasks.	4.49	4.39	n.s.
The joint earnings of husband and wife should legally be under the control of the husband.	4.71	4.49	p≤.01
There are many good reasons why a women should not be President of the U.S. (R)	4.86	4.50	p≤.001
Women should feel free to "drop in" on a male friend and vice versa.	4.50	3.90	p≤.001
Males should be given priority over females in courses which would qualify them for positions as school principals.	4.37	4.34	n.s.
In situations in which both husband and wife are working, housework should be equally shared by them.	4.72	4.53	n.s.

Table 3 (continued)

Sex Role Socialization,\* Female and Male Executives (N=80)

Question	Average Response		ttest result
	Female Exec (N=80)	Male Exec (N=80)	
Women can handle pressures from their jobs as well as men. (R)	1.48	1.80	$p \leq .01$
Male managers are more valuable to an organization than female managers (R)	4.59	4.10	$p \leq .01$
A woman should have as much right to ask a man for a date as a man to ask a woman.	4.73	4.03	$p \leq .001$
It should be up to the father rather than the mother to grant permission to a teenager to use the family car.	4.49	4.30	$p \leq .001$
Sons and daughters should be given equal opportunity for higher education.	4.49	4.03	$p \leq .001$
A marriage is more likely to be successful if the wife's needs are considered after the husband's needs.	4.89	4.65	$p \leq .001$
Fathers are better able than mothers to determine the amount of weekly allowance a child should be given. (R)	4.67	4.38	$p \leq .01$
It should be a mother's responsibility rather than a father's to see that their children are transported to after-school activities. (R)	4.65	4.37	$p \leq .01$
A person should generally be more polite to a woman than a man.	4.63	4.27	$p \leq .001$
In social situation women should feel as free as men to express honest opinion.	4.31	3.52	$p \leq .001$
Fathers are not as able to care for their sick children as mothers are.	4.66	4.34	$p \leq .001$
An applicant's sex should be an important consideration in a job screening.	4.31	4.09	$p \leq .01$

Table 3 (continued)

Sex Role Socialization,\* Female and Male Executives (N=80)

Question	Average Response		ttest result
	Female Exec (N=80)	Male Exec (N=80)	
Wives are better able than husbands to send thank you notes when the couple receives gifts.	4.65	4.26	$p \leq .001$
Choice of college is not as important for women as for men.	4.41	4.12	$p \leq .01$

\*Sex role socialization measured by the Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES):

Responses ranged from 1-strongly disagree  
 2-disagree  
 3-neutral or no opinion  
 4-agree  
 5-strongly agree

(R) indicates that the question was reversed for the analysis.

t-test significance indicates that the average responses of females and males  
 were statistically significantly different.

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levels, since this sample represents persons with relatively high organizational rank. Perceptions of equality between men and women may be an attitudinal barrier to women at lower organizational levels.

#### Career Paths and Attitudes

Demographic background information shows that these women have attained high levels in their organizations (see Tables 1 and 2). These women hold positions equal in rank, budgetary and managerial authority and responsibility as the men in their organizations. Yet, an important consideration in the examination of internal career paths is whether the individual has line (managerial) responsibility or has a staff position. Responses to career history questions (job title) were classified in terms of whether the respondent's current position was in a line or staff position. These responses were then compared in terms of gender of the respondent and a Chi-square test computed to determine if women were more likely to be in staff positions than men. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. As shown in this table, most of the respondents were in line positions, and females were no more likely to be in staff positions, as indicated by the non-significant Chi-square test. This result is consistent with previous research on the career paths of successful women and men, which suggests that the path to the top for women is through line authority (Larwood & Gattiker, 1987). It is important to note that, given the research design of this study, these women had already attained high organizational rank. The fact that these women were predominantly in line positions indicates the importance of line positions over staff positions with respect to career attainment.



Table 4

Sex of Respondent by Line/Staff Position: Matched Sample (N=80)

Count	Staff	Line	Row Total
Female	18	62	80 50.0
Male	20	60	80 50.0
Column Total	38 23.4	122 76.6	160 100.00

Chi-square test of statistical significance:

	<u>Value</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Chi-square	.317	1	.573



Complete data on internal career paths were available for 25 of the matched pairs of female and male executives. These data were graphed by year and by level of attainment to show the female executives' paths to the top of their organization in comparison to their male peers. Case examples from these career paths were selected for their representativeness and to provide a view of career paths of successful women across various industries. These graphs are provided in Cases 1 through 5 in the Appendix of this report. Inspection of these graphs shows that the career paths for the female executives were generally the same as those of the male executives. The issue of how long it has taken female executives to reach their level of attainment in comparison to their male counterparts was statistically tested using a t-test for the years of total job experience for the matched sample. These results, presented below, indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between the years of experience for female and male executives, indicating similarity in the paths to the top, in terms of years to reach the upper levels.

Group -----	Mean -----	St. Dev. -----	Significance of Mean Difference -----
Female Exec	12.70 yrs*	9.07 yrs	$p \leq .42$ (not significant)
Male Exec	13.14 yrs*	10.81 yrs	

\*years of total job experience

In addition to the case analysis of internal career paths, career attitudes and outcomes were also assessed for both the female executive sample and the matched sample. Overall, the women were just as satisfied with their jobs as their male peers, and they were equally committed (loyal) to the organizations they work for at present. Women reported that they experienced

no more job stress than males and there were no significant differences in intentions to quit their job between women and men in this sample. There was, however, a statistically significant difference in women's and men's career progress expectations. Women and men differed on their perceptions of their own mobility potential, despite the fact that many women had already attained high levels in their organizations. Two questions contributed to this overall difference. When asked the question, "I expect that I will attain a higher level in this organization," men were more likely to agree than women. Also, men were more inclined to agree with the statement, "I expect to be promoted as rate faster than my peers." Hence, positive perceptions of career mobility perceptions were more prevalent for male respondents than female respondents.

#### Mentorship and Networking

Many organizations encourage informal networking through the development of mentoring relationships, which are career enhancing working relationships between senior executives and junior executives (Kram, 1983). With respect to working relationships that helped develop the careers of the female executives in this sample (which was referred to as "mentoring" in the survey), 71.6% of the female executive sample indicated that they had experienced a mentoring relationship in their career (38.1% currently had mentors). Information on the characteristics of these mentoring relationships is provided in Table 5. As shown in this table, twenty-five percent of the female executives reported having only one mentor, most reported that they had multiple mentors over the course of their career. The average length of the mentoring relationships was 4.53 years and many of the female executives who reported having mentors (49%)

Table 5

## Mentorship and Networking, Female Executives: Mentors (N=276)

Question	Response	Percent*
Have you ever had a mentor?	Yes	71.6%
	No	27.8%
Do you currently have a mentor?	Yes	38.1%
	No	33.5%
How many mentors have you had over the course of your career?	One	25.0%
	Two	23.3%
	Three	12.5%
	Four or more	39.2%
Average length of the mentor-protége relationships	4.53 years	
Were most of your mentors male or female?	Male	49.4%
	Female	6.3%
	Equally mixed	14.8%
Most current mentor-protége initiated by...	Mentor	10.2%
	Self	10.8%
	Both	47.2%
Most current mentor's position	Supervisor	25.0%
	Other Supv.	5.1%
	Member, other organization	10.2%
	Supv. in chain of command	10.2%
	Peer	9.1%
Most current mentor's gender	Male	49.4%
	Female	51.6%
Length of most current mentor-protége relationship	6.64 years	

\*Percentage of those responding. Percentages may not total 100% due to missing data.

noted that most of their mentors were male. Most indicated that their current mentoring relationship was initiated by both the mentor and themselves. With respect to the mentor's organizational position, the most frequent response (25%) was that the mentor was the supervisor. Most of the female executives' current mentors were male (49.4%) and the current mentoring relationship had lasted for over 6 years.

For mentoring in the matched sample, women were just as likely as men to report having had a mentor at some point in their career, based on Chi-square tests for the matched sample of 80 female executives and their male peers. Hence, having a mentor appears to be an important characteristic of the career of women who have made it to the top of their organizations.

Since this was a high ranking sample, respondents were also asked to indicate whether they had ever mentored other individuals (i.e. had proteges). Table 6 shows the results for the analysis of the respondents serving as mentors to others. About forty percent of the respondents indicated that they had been a mentor. They indicated that they had been a mentor, on the average, 4 times over the course of their career. These relationships were reported to have lasted an average of 3.34 years and most of the proteges of these female executives (27.8% of those responding to this question) were female. The most current mentoring relationship was initiated by either the mentor or both the mentor and the protege, and the position of the protege was either a direct subordinate (16.5%) or another subordinate in the chain of command (15.3%).

Next, the correlations between ever having a mentor and currently having a mentor and career outcomes for the female executive sample were computed. This analysis indicated a significant correlation between having had a mentor

Table 6

## Mentorship and Networking, Female Executives: Proteges (N=276)

Question	Response	Percent*
Have you ever mentored another individual?	Yes	40.9%
	No	31.8%
How many proteges have you had over the course of your career?	Average = 4 proteges	
On the average, how long did these mentor-protege relationships last?	3.34 years	
Were most of your proteges male or female?	Male	5.1%
	Female	27.8%
	Equally mixed	8.0%
Current mentor-protege relationship was initiated by...	Self	16.5%
	Protege	2.3%
	Both	22.2%
Position of current protege	Immediate subord.	16.5%
	Subordinate in chain of command	15.3%
	Peer	1.1%
	Member, other organization	1.1%
I have never been a mentor	Yes	38.6%
	No	41.5%
Do you have a specific person in mind to mentor?	Yes	38.6%
	No	51.1%
Is that person male or female?	Male	14.2%
	Female	23.9%
Race of the person you have in mind to mentor?	White	36.4%
	Afro-American	1.7%
	Hispanic	1.7%
	Asian	.6%

\*Percentage of those responding. Percentages may not total 100% due to missing data.

at some point in the female executives' career and the level of positive career expectations held by the female executive (correlation = .33, significance:  $p \leq .01$ ). This analysis indicates that women who have had a mentor are more likely to perceive that they will be promoted by their organization. A significant correlation was also found for currently having a mentor and the female executives' current salary level (correlation = .23, significance:  $p \leq .05$ ). This indicates that having a mentor was positively and significantly associated with higher salary levels.

With respect to the matched sample, women were just as likely as men to report being a mentor, based on Chi-square tests for the matched sample. Women were equally likely to have intentions to be a mentor. However, women reported that they were more interested in mentoring women than their male counterparts. Women executives were also more willing to mentor "someone of the opposite sex," than their male counterparts. These results, taken together, indicate that perhaps women are more willing to serve as mentors than men. These findings indicate a possible gender difference in willingness to be a mentor to younger executives.

#### Career versus Family Decisions

First, the presence of children under 18 living at home was examined as a possible contributor to the careers of female executives. The data were analyzed, using t-tests, to compare women who had children under the age of 18 living at home to those who did not. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 7, and reveal significant differences between these two groups in terms of lower career expectations, stress, thoughts of quitting and having a mentor. Examination of the average scale values reported in the table

Table 7

Female Executives: Children under 18 (N=276)

Question	Average Response		t-test Result
	No children under 18	Children under 18	
<u>Promotion Expectations</u>			
I expect to be promoted in my organization	3.52	3.01	p≤.01
I expect that I will attain a higher level in my organization	3.44	2.91	p≤.01
I expect to be promoted at a rate faster than my peers	3.25	2.91	p≤.01
<u>Job Stress</u>			
Job frequently conflicts with family duties	2.84	3.26	p≤.02
<u>Turnover Intentions</u>			
It will be very costly to quit present job	3.76	4.21	p≤.01
Really don't have time to look for another job	2.89	3.28	p≤.04
Would not quit my job unless I had another job	3.61	4.05	p≤.02
Will probably leave my job in the next year	1.99	1.67	p≤.02
<u>Mentorship</u>			
Have you ever had a mentor?	1.35	1.19	p≤.01



indicate that women with children under 18 have lower career expectations, higher levels of stress and more thoughts of quitting than women who do not have children under 18 living at home. Also, they were less likely to report having a mentor.

The section on career versus family decision also contained questions regarding employer accommodation to family concerns, family policy implementation and utilization, and the extent to which family relocation decisions had resulted in career change. For the female executive sample, the results of the analysis of employer accommodation to family concerns are shown in Table 8. As shown in this table, most of the female executives surveyed indicated that their employers made accommodations in working hours in order to take care of problems at home "most of the time" (68.2% of those responding). If the respondent had children under the age of 18 living at home, the female respondents indicated that the employer made accommodations in working hours to attend to children's needs "most of the time" as well (29.5% of those responding). The percentages for accommodations by the female executives' spouse/partners' employer were somewhat less, as indicated in Table 7.

Table 9 contains the results of the analysis for the survey section on the impact of family relocation on the female executives' careers. For the female executive sample, 19.9% of those responding to the question indicated that they had relocated because of a spouse/partners' career change. Of those most relocations occurred only once or twice and most respondents (13.6% of those responding to the question) indicated that the relocation had affected her career somewhat or a great deal. For those who had relocated due to a spouse/partner's career change, 5.7% indicated that relocation had resulted in a downward career move, 8.5% indicated that relocation had resulted in an



Table 8

Career versus Family Decisions, Female Executive Sample: Employer  
Accommodation to Family Concerns (N=276)

Question	Response	Percent*
To what extent does <u>your</u> employer make accommodations in your working hours in order for you to take care of problems at home?	Rarely	1.7%
	Infrequently	4.5%
	Half of the time	4.0%
	Some of the time	17.0%
	Most of the time	68.2%
To what extent does <u>your partner's</u> employer make accommodations in his working hours in order for him to take care of problems at home?	Rarely	2.8%
	Infrequently	2.3%
	Half of the time	5.1%
	Some of the time	10.8%
	Most of the time	29.5%
If you have children under the age of 18 living at home, to what extent is <u>your</u> employer willing to make accommodations in your working hours in order for you to attend to children's needs?	Rarely	2.8%
	Infrequently	2.3%
	Half of the time	2.3%
	Some of the time	7.4%
	Most of the time	29.5%
If you have children under the age of 18 living at home, to what extent is <u>your partners'</u> employer willing to make accommodations in his working hours in order for him to attend to children's needs?	Rarely	6.3%
	Infrequently	4.0%
	Half of the time	3.4%
	Some of the time	6.8%
	Most of the time	19.9%

\*Percentage of those responding. Percentages may not total 100% due to missing data.

Table 9

Career versus Family Decisions, Female Executive Sample: Relocation and Career Change (N=276)

Question	Response	Percent*
Have you relocated because of a partners' career change?	No	76.1%
	Yes	19.9%
If yes, how many times?	1	4.5%
	2	4.0%
	3	1.1%
Did the relocation(s) affect your career?	Not at all	4.0%
	Somewhat	6.8%
	A great deal	6.8%
	Extremely	3.4%
Did this move result in a career move for you that was...	Downward	5.7%
	Upward	8.5%
	Lateral	6.3%
To what extent did <u>your partner's</u> employer provide help with your job search?	Not at all	17.6%
	Somewhat	1.7%
	A great deal	.6%
	Extremely	.6%
Has your partner refused transfer/promotion requiring relocation because of your career?	No	83.0%
	Yes	4.0%

\*Percentage of those responding. Percentages may not total 100% due to missing data.

upward career move and 6.3% indicated that relocation had resulted in a lateral career move. Most (17.6% of those responding) indicated that their spouse/partners' employers had provided no assistance in their job search. A large percentage of the respondents (83%) indicated that their partner had never refused transfer/promotion requiring relocation because of the female executives career.

A section of the survey asked the respondent to indicate whether their organization offered a variety of organizational policies associated with managing family concerns at work. The most notable aspect of the results from this section is the lack of some family-supportive policies. Promising areas were employee personal loans, parental leave policies and flexible working hours. The percentage of organizations offering family policies (implementation) and utilization by respondent gender are shown in Table 10. As shown this table, these policies were often not implemented and even when offered, they were often not utilized by respondents. This is clearly an area where future research is needed to determine why such policies are not being implemented and utilized by executives.

#### Influences on Career Outcomes and Attitudes of Female Executives

The relative impact of sex role socialization, career path (line/staff), having a mentor and the presence of children under 18 living at home was assessed using separate hierarchical regression analyses for the career outcome and career attitude variables (refer to Figure 1 for a summary of this model). Several dependent variables were examined, and one regression equation was statistically significant at the  $p \leq .05$  level. The equation for career plateau (number of months since last promotion) produced an F-value of

Table 10

Implementation and Utilization of Family Supportive Policy: Matched Sample (N=80)

Family Policy	Implementation*	Utilization	
		Female Exec	Male Exec
Employee loans	46	29	33
Cafeteria benefits	21	20	16
Investment counseling	20	14	12
Job sharing	12	5	5
Part-time jobs, all levels	21	5	5
Multiple career track	20	5	9
Childcare vouchers	17	2	1
Information/referral	21	8	8
Employee Assistance Program	22	7	5
On-site child care	5	2	1
Community child care	5	0	0
Parental leave	33	4	0
Dependent care	2	0	0
Dependent care leave	22	4	3
Flexible working hours	43	23	31

\*This number is the number of respondents indicating that their organization currently offered the program (the sample was comprised of 80 organizations).

8.31, which was significant at  $p \leq .001$  and this equation accounted for 56% percent of the variance in the career plateaus of the female executives. As shown in Figure 2, sex role egalitarian attitudes of the female executives were negatively related to lapse in promotions (hence, the more egalitarian, the less the number of months since promotion). Also, whether the female executive was in a line or staff position was significantly and negatively related to promotion lapse (incumbents in staff positions experienced longer a longer duration since the last promotion). Having a mentor was significantly and negatively related to promotion lapse, meaning that those with mentors reported fewer months since the last promotion. Having children under 18 living at home was not significantly related to career plateaus.

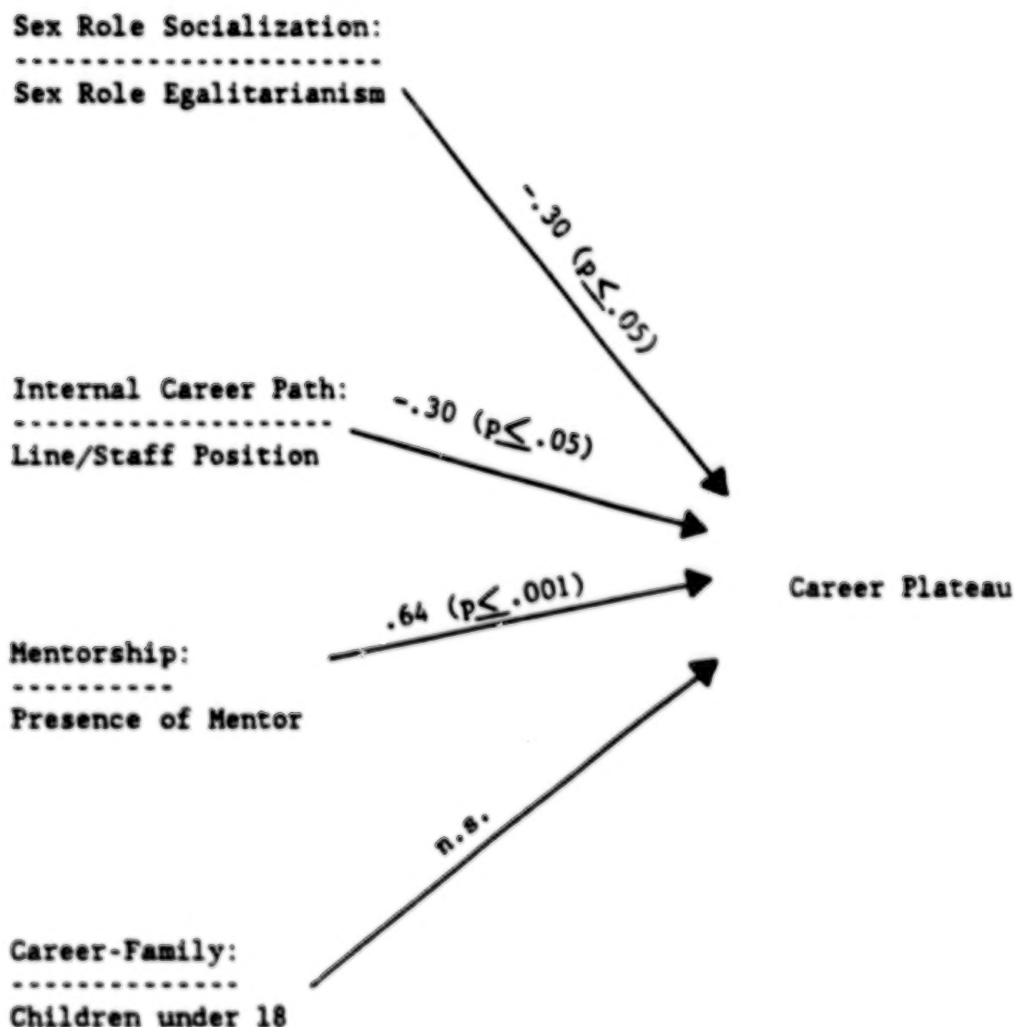


Figure 2. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Results for Influences on Career Plateaus of Female Executives

Notes: Career Plateau was the Number of Months since last Promotion.  
See Table 3 for a listing of the Sex Role Socialization Questions  
Staff=1, Line=1; Mentor=1, No Mentor=2; No Children=0; Children=1

### Summary and Implications

Significant attitudinal differences in the sex role egalitarianism perceptions of male and female executives were found. These attitudes indicate that pervasive stereotypical attitudes toward the role of women in society still exist; particularly for the top level male executives in the matched sample. With respect to internal career paths, the results of the study indicate that more similarities than differences were found in the careers of the female and male executives in the matched sample. The differences identified were in the areas of entry level (some women entered organizations in receptionist or clerical positions) and career progress expectations. Many of the female executives reported that they had experienced mentoring relationships over the course of their career, and these relationships were significantly related to career outcomes, in terms of expectation of promotion and salary. Further, it appears that female executives had already served as mentors to younger executives, particularly females, and were willing to be mentors in the future.

The career versus family decisions appeared to raise some issues for this sample of female executives. Analysis of women who had children under 18 living at home and those who did not indicated that women with dependent children reported lowered career promotion expectations, job stress, intent to leave their organization and lack of mentoring. Yet, most were married, and many had children. They reported that their employers were often willing to make accommodations in their working hours in order for them to take care of problems at home or tend to childrens' needs. Yet, many family supportive policies were not being offered. In many cases, these programs were not being utilized even when offered by the organizations. The results of this study



suggest that further analysis of the organizational policies supporting work and family issues is needed.

The career issues of the 1990s will encompass aspects of the individual, the family and the organization. This study addressed all of these areas. Further, the comparison of female executives and male peers clarified the similarities and differences in the career attitudes and experiences of women at the highest levels. It is hoped that the results of this study encourage change in the attitudes, behaviors, and organizational policies which will enable increasing numbers of women to break through the glass ceiling in the coming decade.

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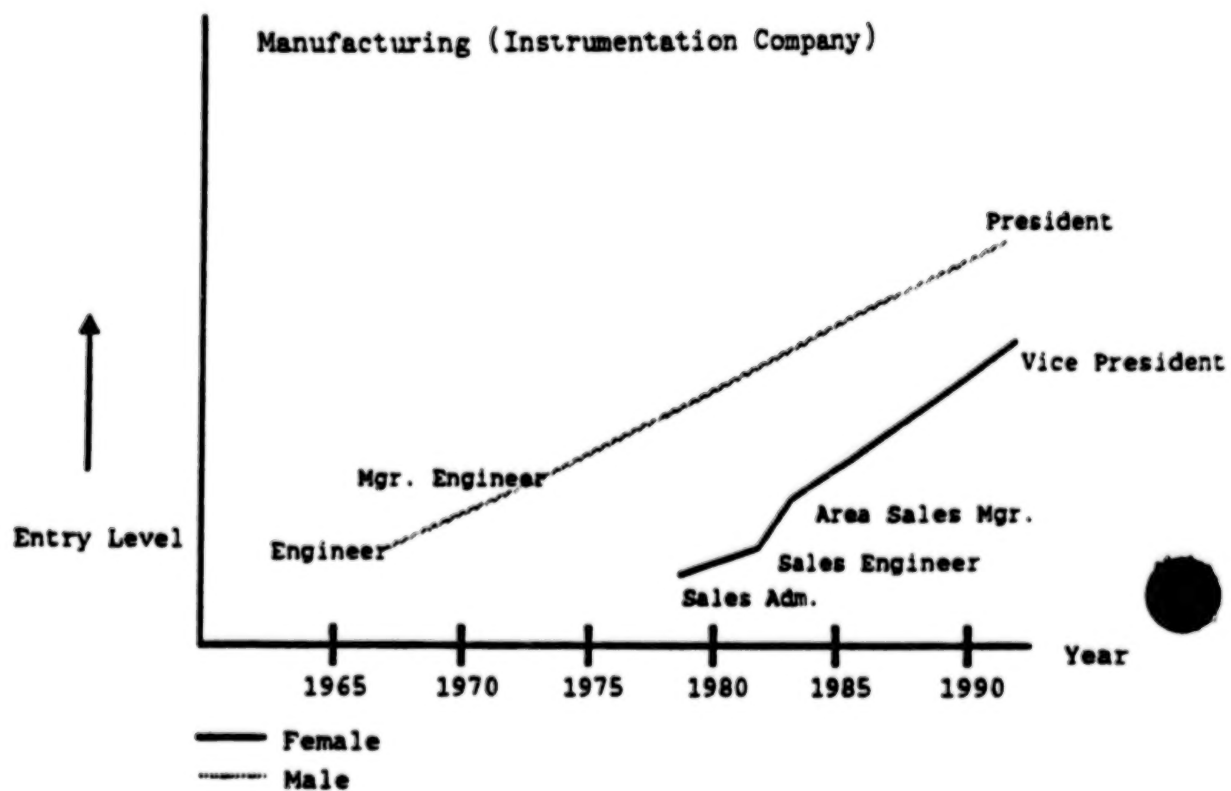
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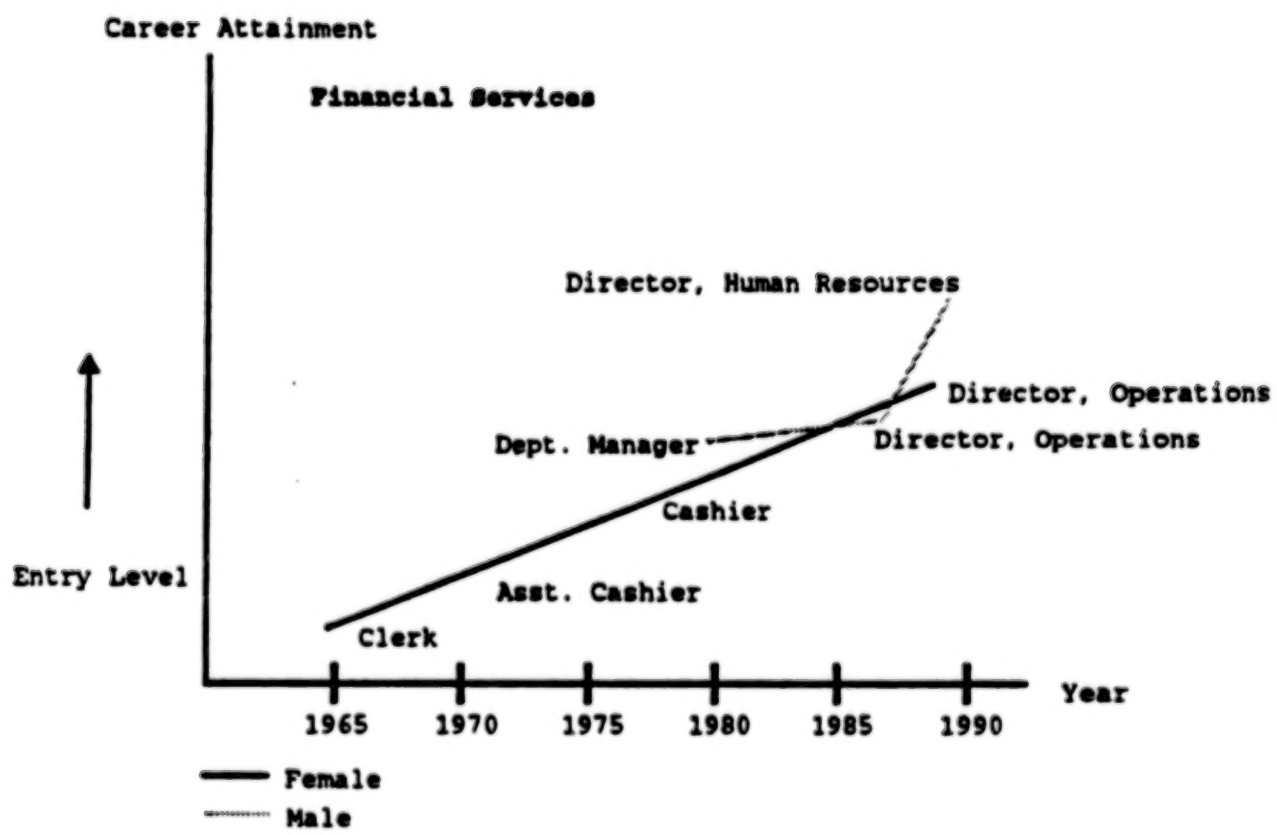
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APPENDIX:  
INTERNAL CAREER PATHS  
CASES 1 - 5

## Career Attainment

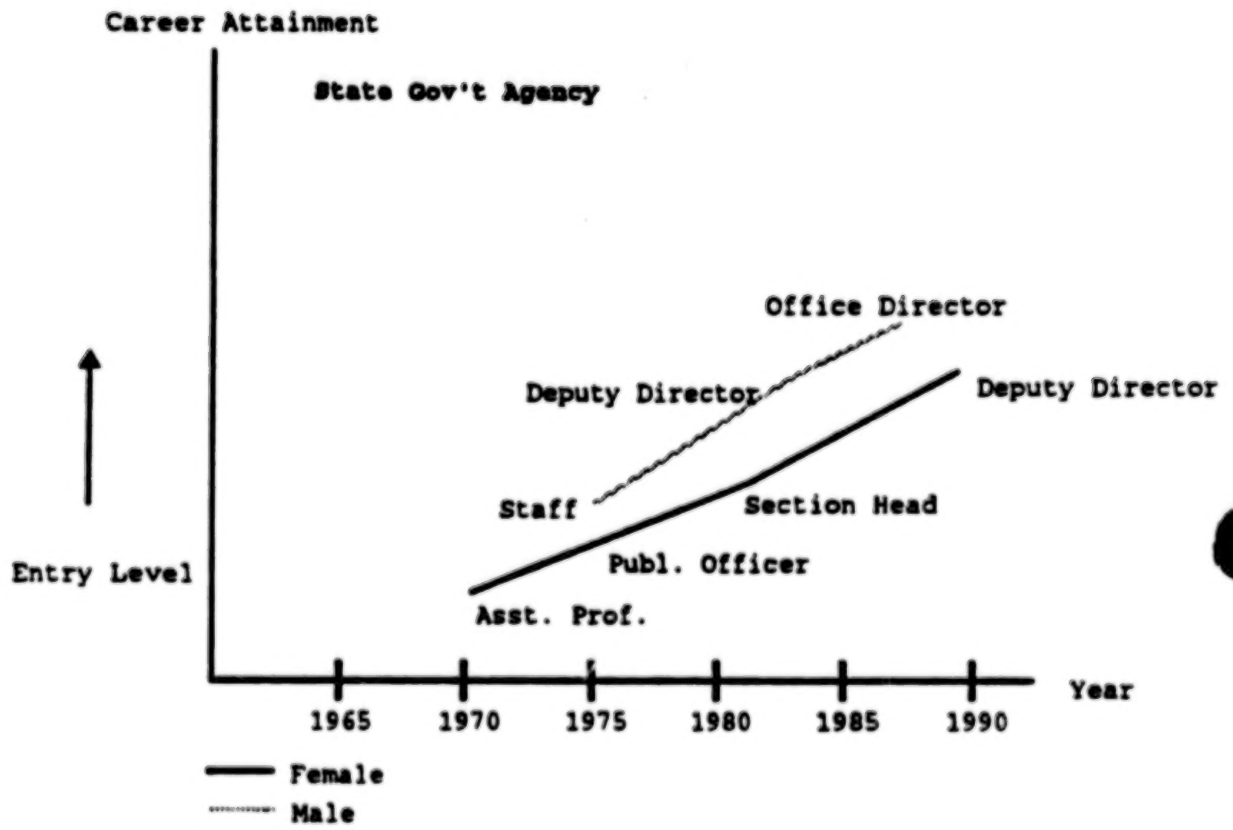


Case 1

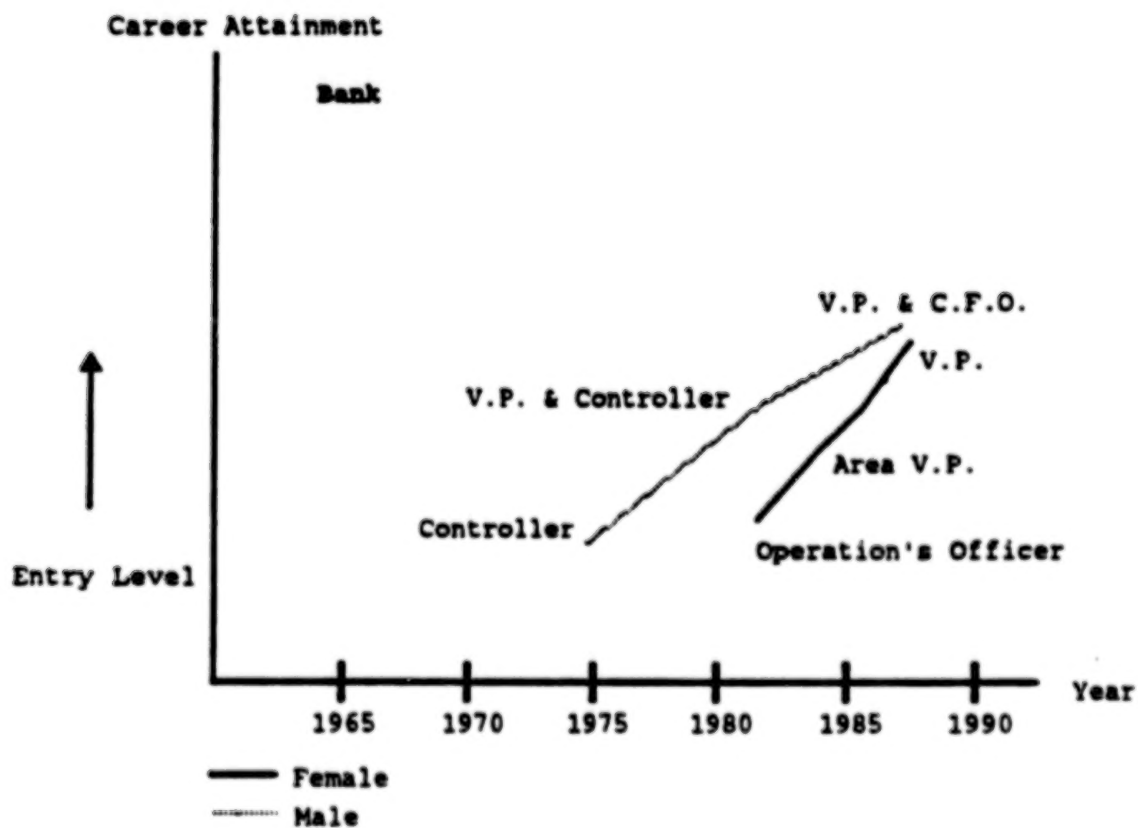


Case 2

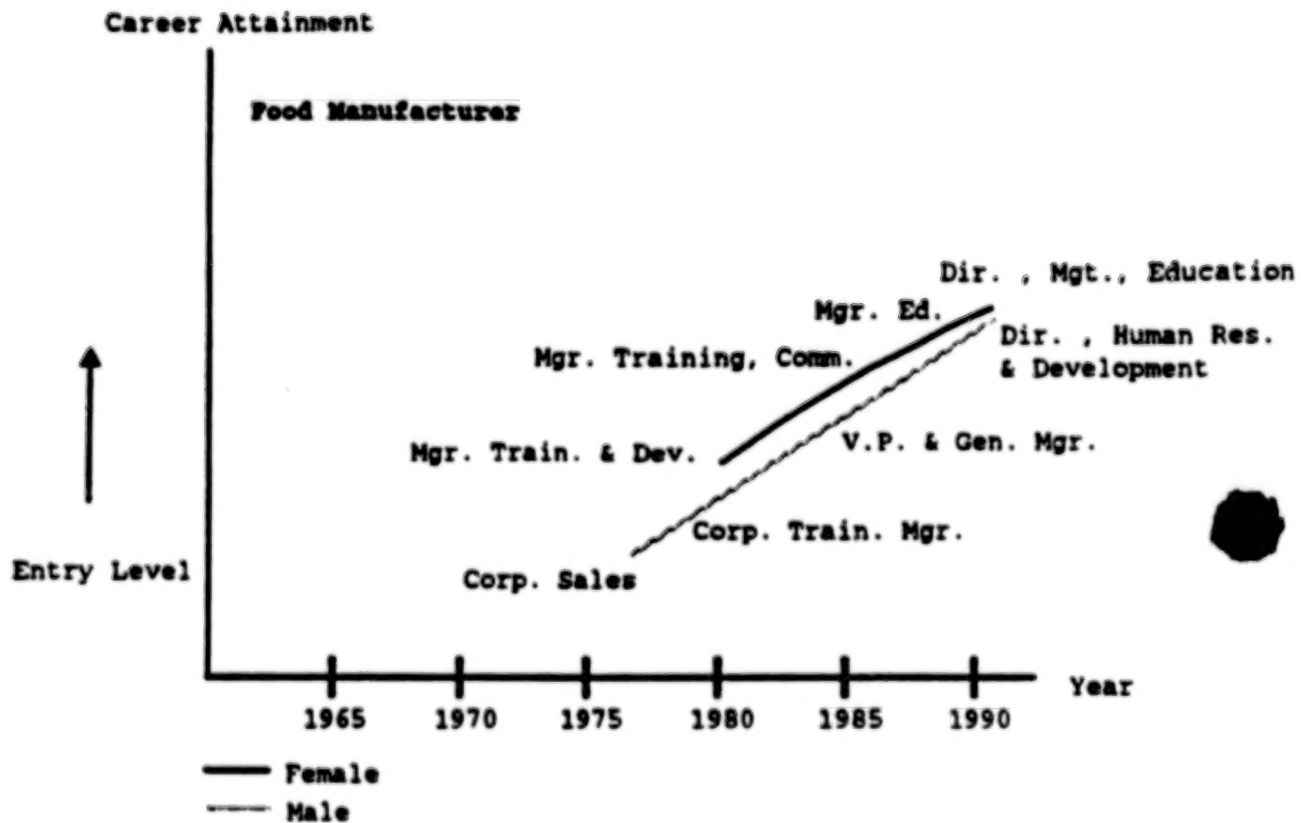




Case 3



Case 4



Case 5

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